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brought to bear on marriage and divorce, feminism, feminine independence, and particularly upon the attitude of men and women towards legitimate, illegitimate and adopted children (Chap. V), is so balanced and so wisely observant that it delights and instructs. The same is true of the subjects treated in the earlier part of the book: women and property, the third generation, and the perils of will-making. There should, perhaps, be particular interest in these chapters for California lawyers, especially in that on the third generation, for they indicate the manner of trusteeships in an Eastern state and suggest many comparisons with our own conditions. The illusive moral of the chapter referred to remains in the mind.

*A. T. Wright.*

THE LAW OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS. By R. Preston Shealey. The Ronald Press, New York, 1919. pp. xi, 300.

Any attorney who has in the past fallen into the difficulties which surround the making and enforcement of rights under contracts with the Federal government will welcome this book. Its introduction states that its design is "to have in readily accessible form . . . to both the lawyer and the business man . . . the statutes providing for and regulating contracts with the government, the leading decisions construing these statutes, and practical suggestions as to the statutes and duties of the government officers in calling for bids and awarding contracts." Within the scope which he appoints, the author seems to have done his work well and to have created a useful guide to a perplexing situation.

The chief interest to the reviewer, however, is not in the book itself nor the handling of the problems which it presents. It is indirectly a commentary upon the high cost of government, estimates for which have placed it as high as one-fourth of the national income. In the appendix Mr. Shealey indicates (page 212) sixteen different departments making purchases with purchasing agencies under each, ranging in number from three to a dozen, a total of sixty-eight purchasing authorities. At page 216 he shows disbursing officers and agencies of about the same number, while pages 219 to 282 are made up of extracts in fine print from the statutes of the United States dealing with the matter of purchases for every conceivable purpose. That these purchasing agents frequently need the same thing for different departments is obvious and that they may and do bid against each other has been revealed by our recent war experience. No large corporation consuming various commodities nowadays can afford to let the various departments purchase against each other in the open market. Some cities have seen this and have established a purchasing agencies for all their departments. Why so vast a consumer of every kind of commodity as the Federal government might not also have a single purchasing authority is a thing which puzzles the taxpayer's mind as much as it costs his pocketbook.

*G. H. Robinson.*